



Division of Youth Services

Strategic Plan

Mission

To create, support, and sustain quality, comprehensive programming that supports all City of Toledo youth, so that every young person may reach their fullest potential.

Vision

The City of Toledo is a place where our young people are safe and healthy, and grow into productive adults who chose to live, work, and raise their families in our city.

Principles

Principles are expressed in observable behaviors — how we show up and treat each other in the work. These behaviors are instrumental in achieving our mission and vision.

1. EMPOWER

We treat every child in a manner that makes them feel valued and empowers their potential;

2. GIVING VOICE

We give youth a voice in their future and include them in designing the services they receive;

3. JUSTICE, EQUITY, DIVERSITY, AND INCLUSION (JEDI)

Our programs and initiatives are intentionally designed to ensure justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion (JEDI);

4. LISTEN

We listen to and connect with our youth in order to understand their basic needs, which must be met before they can benefit from programs;

5. COMMUNITY

We actively engage as facilitators and participants in a community of youth service providers working collaboratively to support and empower Toledo's youth;

6. TRANSPARENCY

We communicate and interact with our youth, partners, stakeholders, and the public in a transparent, unbiased, and understandable manner; and

7. COMPASSION

We engage with all youth, as well as our partners and stakeholders with compassion and empathy.

Goals and Strategies

SAFETY & VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Promote and increase safety of our youth.

Partner with City of Toledo Safety Department to pursue youth-focused gun safety efforts.

- Continue community listening sessions by planning 4 roundtables per year.
- Explore opportunity to engage youth about gun violence messaging through photography by developing and implementing a “shoot this not that” photography program.
- Utilize community feedback to develop additional youth violence prevention programming by developing prototype violence prevention programming.

Partner with City of Toledo Safety Department to pursue youth-focused gun safety efforts.

- Develop “safe place” insignia for local businesses and create a window sticker to be marketed through the Chamber of Commerce.

HEALTH & WELLBEING

Promote and increase the health and wellbeing of Toledo youth.

Build a youth services resource portal where providers and promote their programs, services, and resources.

- Continue community listening sessions by planning 4 roundtables per year.
- Plan and execute a “Youth Service Provider Summit” and invite resources to share information and identify opportunities for collaboration. Collect, organize, and publish a digital resource catalog.

Partner with Health Department and medical providers to integrate health and wellness checks into the Department’s current recreational programming.

- Identify opportunities for joint programming and implement engaging wrap-around programming.

Partner with mental health providers to develop stress and conflict management coping tools for youth.

- Identify potential public and private partners and schools willing to start support groups.
- Develop engaging programming to teach mental health tools and utilize partner expertise to develop programming.

JOB PREPAREDNESS

Bolster and expand job preparedness programs.

Develop intern and summer employment opportunities to support summer programming and park maintenance.

- Work with City of Toledo Human Resources to develop intern opportunities for youth to gain summer job experience in recreation and programming.
- Identify and overcome real and perceived hurdles to directly hiring seasonal entry level positions and develop solutions to allow for direct hire of entry level positions, thereby creating a pipeline of candidates for our field divisions.

Partner with youth service providers, education partners, and local business leaders on joint job preparedness programs.

- Identify partnership opportunities for joint programming and develop pilot programs to better engage students and young adults with job preparedness opportunities.

Partner with local schools and colleges to provide service hour volunteer opportunities.

- Identify potential partners and understand requirements of current programs.
- Develop opportunities for job shadowing and service projects and identify staff willing to participate in job shadowing activities.
- Develop service projects.

EDUCATION

Support a successful and thriving education system in our city.

Work with community partners to develop and support a peer-to-peer mentorship program.

- Continue community listening sessions by planning 4 roundtables per year.
- Work with community partners to explore and develop mentoring opportunities for youth. Recruit and train adults and teens to serve as mentors.
- Work with community partners to explore and develop opportunities for youth to serve as mentors and pair youth to serve as positive role models to younger kids.

Develop a youth-language version of the strategic plan that can be shared with middle schoolers

- Work with YAB to translate the strategic plan into understandable language for youth and distribute youth version of strategic plan.

Work with community partners to develop a series of “life skills” trainings to support young adults who choose a path other than college.

- Identify public and private partners and schools willing to start support groups.
- Develop engaging programming to teach life skills and utilize partner expertise to develop programming.

YOUTH SERVICE PROGRAMS

Ensure continuous improvement through rigorous selection, assessment, and evaluation of all programs and initiatives.

Work with community partners to expand access to gym space- especially in the winter.

- Continue community listening sessions by planning 4 roundtables per year.
- Develop explore creative partnership opportunities and recruit a roster of partners willing to provide space.
- Work with community partners to develop and implement organized indoor programming for youth to recreate and engage with each other.

Partner with TARTA to provide transportation options for youth to and from programs and events.

- Work with TARTA to develop and distribute educational material to help youth understand how to utilize public transit.
- Work with TARTA to improve real and perceived safety of youth on public transit and develop messaging, programs, and/or policies to improve safety.
- Support TARTA's initiative to provide summer bus passes to youth and develop messaging to promote TARTA's bus pass program.

Improve the Youth Service Division's online presence to better engage with youth.

- Fully populate the City of Toledo Youth Services webpage
- Explore the use of social media platforms to advertise programming and engage youth and utilize partner expertise and youth involvement to develop a social media presence.

Create an evaluation protocol for youth programs funded and/or administered through the division.

- Develop data collection and reporting protocols for programs

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Demonstrate sustainable progress with youth civic engagement.

Expand the current Youth Advisory Board to include more diverse voices and counsel the Division on programs, events, and initiatives.

- Continue community listening sessions by planning 4 roundtables per year.
- Recruit and train teens from public, private, and parochial high schools to expand the Youth Advisory Board.
- Establish topic specific work groups to engage youth in the development of division initiatives.

Investigate opportunities for youth-led volunteer programs in the parks.

- Develop of a roster of youth-led activities, such as dances and movie nights, and support the Youth Advisory Board in the development and execution of these events.

Develop programming and services focused on supporting families and parents.

- Work with program partners and service providers to develop and deliver programs focused on families.
- Utilize partner expertise to develop wraparound programming to support parents.

JEDI: REACHING ALL YOUTH

Ensure equitable access to programs and services for all of Toledo's youth.

Develop opportunities for youth from different backgrounds to interact.

- Continue community listening sessions by planning 4 roundtables per year.
- Work with community partners to explore and develop opportunities for youth understand and respect each other. Utilize fun programming to engage youth and their capacity interact with each other.

Develop opportunities for youth from different backgrounds to interact.

- Identify and support Gay Straight Alliance affiliations in public, private and parochial schools and schools willing to start support groups.

Ensure that access to programming and services are administered equitably throughout the city.

- Examine program and service delivery reporting from an equity perspective and adjust programs and services to meet identified needs.